

THE
ROOKWOOD
POTTERY • COMPANY
OF • CINCINNATI • OHIO





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Getty Research Institute

ROOKWOOD POTTERY

FOUNDED IN 1880

ITS HISTORY
AND ITS AIMS



ROOKWOOD POTTERY COMPANY
CINCINNATI

This book describes the unusual processes of making pottery at Rookwood, as developed throughout its interesting history of devotion to the high ideals of this most ancient art.

It tells of an administrative direction seeking always a free and original form of the art; helping a devoted group of American artists to be as untrammelled as possible in the frank expression of a new feeling in ceramics, and giving them the support of a highly organized chemical laboratory charged with broad and intensive scientific research.



ROOKWOOD'S HISTORY

THE POTTERY was founded in 1880 by Mrs. Maria Longworth Storer, who named it Rookwood, after her father's country estate near the city. In 1883, Mr. W. W. Taylor assumed the active direction of the works as the partner of Mrs. Storer. Upon her retirement in 1890 she transferred her interest to Mr. Taylor, who formed the present company, and remained its controlling influence until his death in 1913 — and then by will placed his stock in the hands of trustees for the perpetuation of the policy which had given Rookwood its unusual character as an art industry. Under his direction as president the present buildings were

erected in 1892 and extended in 1899 and 1904. They crown the summit of Mt. Adams, one of the city hills, and while remarkably picturesque in themselves, they command in every direction beautiful views of the river, the city and its suburbs.

The Pottery is managed on lines opposite to the prevailing factory system, as the effort is to attain a higher art rather than commercial output. Absolutely no printing patterns are used nor any duplicates made of signed decorated pieces. A spirit of freedom and liberality has prevailed in order to cultivate in every way individual artistic feeling among the workers employed.

The decorators comprise both men and women, and are drawn mainly from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. The decorations are placed upon the moist clay before any firing, the colors being mixed with clay and becoming part of the ware itself. The pieces, after decoration, are fired into



biscuit and the various glazes are applied in subsequent firings. These methods, while necessary to produce the beautiful underglaze effects of Rookwood, are rarely used elsewhere, as they increase so largely the risks and expense of manufacture.

The clays in use for all purposes are entirely American and largely from the Ohio Valley. These native clays from the start inclined the

color quality toward yellows, browns and reds, and the decorative medium lent itself to a rather luxuriant style of ornament in rich arrangements of warm color, all of which the transparent glazes merge in deep, mellow tones. As the command of material has strengthened, the beauty of the ware has steadily gained in a harmony of all the elements which compose it, until form, color, decoration and glaze combine to produce those things of beauty which elude all attempts to imitate and make Rookwood a complete novelty in the world's ceramics. The production, however, is not limited to a warm yellow, or red tone, for even dark pieces are often relieved with deep, rich greens and blues. There developed later more advanced types of light arrangements in what are known as "Iris," "Vellum," Soft Porcelain, etc. In these we find the same mellow tone, the same soft brilliancy as in the older ware, which they have largely superseded, because

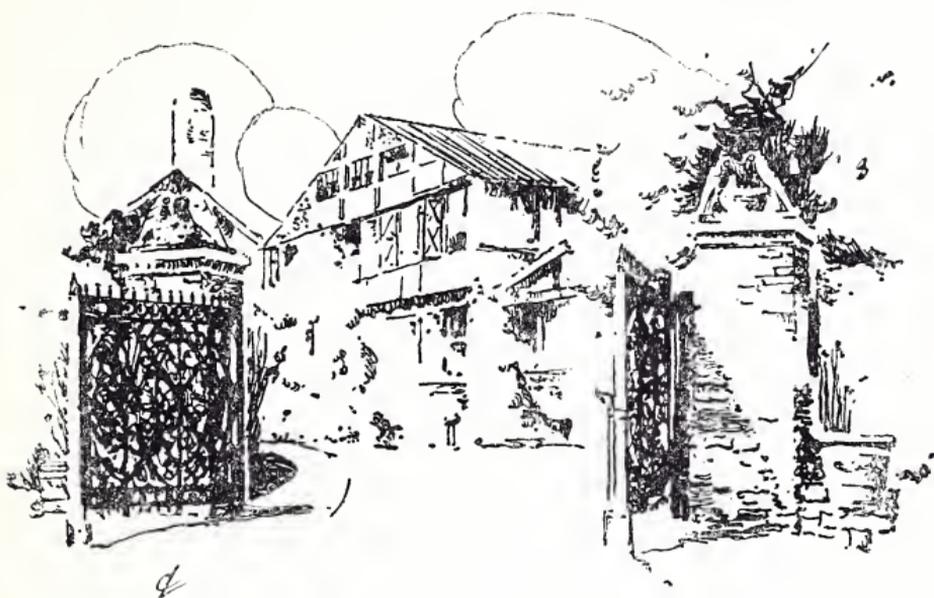


affording to the artist a wider command of color. To the earlier period belongs also the famous "Tiger Eye," first made at Rookwood in 1884. This is the very first of the class known as crystalline glazes, since so extensively developed elsewhere. In most others, however, the crystals appear on the outer surface of the glaze. In Rookwood alone, entirely unlike these other types, the crystalline formation lies deep in the substance of the glaze in luminous sheets of extraordinary beauty.

The Mat Glazes were first made at Rookwood in 1896, and now are among the most admired of its productions. In these the special quality is beauty of texture, though the range and variation of color is very great. To many pieces decoration is applied of flowers or other subjects broadly modeled; of motives derived from American Indian designs and of other conventional ornaments incised or in relief.

The variation of the Mat Glaze type, known as "Vellum" ware, was first shown at St. Louis in 1904, and pronounced by expert judges the only ceramic novelty of the Exposition. Its name indicates the peculiar charm of the glaze texture and it presents for the first time the extraordinary achievement of a transparent mat glaze developed in the fire and not by acid or other after-treatment.

The "Ombroso" type of mat glaze was brought out in 1910. The colors are usually in quiet tones of gray and brown, with occasional accents of



other colors, and the decorations, if any, of relief modeling or incised designs.

At Easter, in 1915, the thirty-fifth year of Rookwood was marked by the public appearance of Rookwood soft Porcelain. It represents, as usual, years of chemical research and kiln trials, and is characterized by rich, heavy color glazes flowing over forms perfectly plain or

decorated with low-relief modeling or painted design.

For its fortieth anniversary, Rookwood revived its famous "Tiger Eye" in a new and more varied range of color. This was followed by many other refinements of glaze textures; among them waxy-textured mats, and the brighter butterfat surfaces. Then came a gradual and full perfection of the "Oxblood" and Flambe types, originated long ago by the great Chinese potters who set a pace in fine ceramics, long since studied.

Rookwood's Fiftieth Year brings out a rich red, other than Ox-blood, also one of the Chinese mysteries. Likewise Rookwood has now added new glaze qualities in wax mat, crystalline and aventurine.

And in decoration, intensive cultivation of frank feeling for pottery imbues the ware with a fresh, new spirit, distinct from the classic in Europe or the traditional Chinese or Persian. Thus it has always a contemporary, living interest, however it may respect the principles which underlie all good art.

ROOKWOOD HONORS

Special Mention — Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Paintings on China, London, 1887.

First Prizes for Pottery Modeled and decorated, and for Painting Underglaze — Pottery and Porcelain Exhibition, Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, 1888.

First Prize Gold Medal for Faience — Exhibition of American Art Industry, Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia, 1889.

Gold Medal — Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1889.

Highest Awards — World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. Also, exhibited in the Fine Arts Building by invitation.

Grand Prix — Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900.

Gold Medal — Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901.

Grand Prix — Exposition Internationale de Ceramique et de Verrerie, St. Petersburg, 1901.

Diploma of Honor (Grand Prix) — International Exposition of Modern Decorative Art, Turin, 1902.

Two Grand Prizes — Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904.

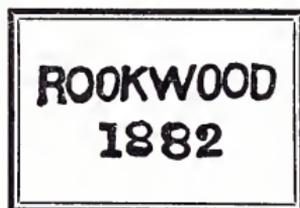
Gold Medal — Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition, 1907.

Grand Prize — Alaska, Yukon and Pacific Exposition, Seattle, 1911.

Examples purchased for the following museums

National Museum, Sevres, France
The Luxembourg, Paris
Royal Industrial Art Museum, Berlin
Museum of Art and Industry, Hamburg
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Museum of the Central School-Stieglitz, St. Petersburg
Imperial Commercial Museum, Tokio, Japan
Museum of Decorative Arts, Copenhagen
Museum of Industrial Arts, Christiania
Museum of Decorative Arts, Bergen
Industrial Art Museum of Baden, Karlsruhe
Moravian Industrial Museum, Brunn
Silesian Industrial Art Museum, Breslau
Royal Industrial Art Museum of Wurtemberg, Stuttgart
Museum of Teplitz, Teplitz
Industrial Art Museum, Prague
City Museum, Dortmund. Industrial Art Museum, Pilsen
Bavarian Industrial Museum, Nuremberg
Industrial Art Museum, Leipzig
Museum of Decorative Arts, Budapest
Industrial Museum, Mulhausen
Industrial Museum, Naples. Industrial Museum, Fribourg
Art Museum of Cincinnati
Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia

ROOKWOOD MARKS



Impressed in the clay. The regular mark from 1882, the date changing each year until 1886.

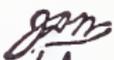
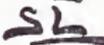


This mark was adopted in 1886. The flame at the top indicates 1887, and a flame is added for every year thereafter, so that the mark for 1900 shows fourteen. For the next century the mark of 1900 is continued with the Roman numerals to designate the year. The mark for 1901 is given on the right above.

It is also customary for purposes of record, to stamp on the bottom of each piece a shape number with a letter indicating size, and another letter referring to the color of the clay used in the body of the piece, W for white, etc.

DECORATORS' MARKS

THE decorators have always cut their initials in the clay on the bottom of pieces painted by them. Such pieces are not duplicated in decoration; even pairs vary somewhat. The complete list of monograms is too long to be given here, but the following list contains the marks of all the present decorators and also the marks of most of the older artists whose pieces are most often seen.

ARV	<i>A. R. Valentien</i>		<i>John D. Wareham</i>
WD	<i>Wm. P. McDonald</i>		<i>Lenore Asbury</i>
	<i>Matt. A. Daly</i>		<i>Sturgis Laurence</i>
AMV	<i>Anna M. Valentien</i>	R.	<i>Fred. Rothenbusch</i>
♀	<i>Grace Young</i>	E.	<i>Edward G. Diers</i>
A.E.W.	<i>Harriet E. Wilcox</i>	E.T.	<i>E. T. Hurley</i>
	<i>K. Shirayamadani</i>	A.F.	<i>Rose Fechheimer</i>
S	<i>Amelia B. Sprague</i>	S	<i>Sara Sax</i>
S	<i>Sallie Toohey</i>	⊙	<i>Carl Schmidt</i>
O.G.R.	<i>O. Geneva Reed Pinney</i>	M	<i>Marianne Mitchell</i>
M.N.	<i>Mary Nourse</i>	E.N.	<i>Edith Noonan</i>
S	<i>Carrie Steinle</i>	L.E.	<i>Lorinda Epply</i>
CAB	<i>Constance A. Baker</i>	A	<i>Albert F. Pons</i>
F	<i>Josephine E. Zettel</i>	CAD	<i>Cecil A. Duell</i>
LNL	<i>Elizabeth Lincoln</i>		<i>Katherine Van Horne</i>
HRS	<i>Harriet R. Strafer</i>		
S	<i>Sallie E. Coyne</i>		

-  *W. E. Hentschel*
- CST.** *Charles S. Todd*
-  *Elizabeth F. McDermott*
-  *Margaret Helen McDonald*
-  *Mary Grace Denzler*
- HL.** *Helen M. Lyons*
-  *Chas. J. McLaughlin*
-  *Patti M. Conant*
-  *Arthur P. Conant*
- VT** *Vera Tischler*
-  *Louise Abel*
- KJ** *Katherine Jones*
-  *Elizabeth Barrett*
-  *Wesley Pullman*
-  *Wilhelmina Rehm*
-  *Jens Jensen*
-  *Janet Harris*



This monogram is pressed into the bottom of every piece, and there is no Rookwood without it.

*For Rookwood Tiles, Mantels,
Architectural Faience and Garden
Pottery, see special pamphlets*

